Chandler Gets Subpoena and Threat by Governor

T-P 6/4/75

Duplantier Says Hearings Ready June 10-11

By G. MICHAEL HARMON

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — The chairman of a legislative committee created to probe Mafia influence in state government said Wednesday that Life magazing writer David Chandler has been served physically with a subpoena to appear at a committee hearing June 10.

Sen. Adrian Duplantier of New Orleans told newsmen that Chandler, author of the Life article which sparked formation of the probe panel, was handed the subpoena in New Orleans Tuesday night.

Duplantier said Chandler and "several other witnesses" were scheduled at public hearings on June 10 and 11.

Gov. John J. McKeithen, however, increased speculation that Chandler would seek court relief from appearing, vowing Wednesday to swear out a perjury warrant against the writer if he says under oath that the April 10 article is true.

"If Chandler swears to the things he said in that article, I shall swear out a warrant for his arrest immediately," McKeithen told a news conference.

McKeithen said he would demand that he he sworn in immediately after Chandler testifies to give his side of the story.

"Me or him, one will have to go to jail real quick," McKeithen said, but added he did not think Chandler would appear.

WOULD CONTINUE

McKeithen has filed suit in the name of the state seeking $10 million in damages from Life for alleged libel.

Duplantier told reporters at a separate news conference following a two-hour closed door meeting that the committee would continue its probe whether Chandler appeared or not.

The New Orleans senator also conceded that there was still "a difference of opinion" on whether citizen members of the legislative committee should be allowed to question witnesses.

Duplantier said he had not decided whether to oppose a resolution introduced in the Senate Wednesday, specifically giving citizen members the right to ask questions.

"I will say this, we are going to follow whatever the Legislature tells us to do," he said. "Whether it is wise, there is a difference of opinion on that."

Cont. in Sec. 1, Page 14, Col. 1

The current committee of seven legislators and eight private citizens was created by a concurrent resolution last month. The lawmakers were given suhpoena and contempt powers, but the citizens were given only an advisory role. They were empowered to sit in on all meetings but not vote.

Dean Paul Hebert of the LSU Law School, chairman of the citizen-half of the committee, said a "majority" of the advisory group "would like to ask questions of witnesses."

Hebert added, however, that the citizens' group was unanimous in agreing that the current resolution did not give them such authority.

ONLY NOTE SENT

If the resolution introduced Wednesday does not pass in time for the June 10-11 hearings, Hebert said, the citizens group will seek approval from Duplantier before asking any questions.

At the first hearing, the advisory panel could only send up a note for Duplantier to read.

The note passing process will continue, Hebert said, but if Duplantier okays the question the citizen member may ask it.

Hebert said the procedure was developed in a separate closed door meeting of the advisory panel, and indicated the decision was not unanimous.

"Some members of the advisory commission thought it not a wise practice to ask questions," Hehert said.

The law school dean has said any increased citizen participation on the committee could open the investigation to constitutional challenge in the courts.

Duplantier said the committee has yet to name a chief counsel, but once one is appointed, he will do most of the questioning. He said a counsel may be named within "a few days."

HAD BEEN ASSURED

The chairman also said there was "no question" the committee probe would continue beyond adjournment of the Legislature, but the group would

SUBPOENA SERVED ON CHANDLER

Continued from Page 1

meet the mandate of the resolution for an interim report prior to adjournment.

Duplantier said he had been assured of the "full cooperation" of both Baton Rouge and state police investigators in the committee probe.

He said administration leaders had promised quick action on a bill to give the committee a $100,000 appropriation to conduct the probe.

Duplantier also announced that future hearings of the committee will be broadcast via closed circuit television into a nearby room to allow more members of the public to view the proceedings.

He said the seven lawmaker members of the committee will co-sponsor four bills in the current session drafted by the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Criminal Justice.

The measures, Duplantier said, "could be effective tools against organized crime," they would establish an Evangeline area crime laboratory commission, crime labs in each state law enforcement planning district, authorize police to destroy pinball machines with check off devises, and hike penalities for contempt.

The resolution to allow the citizens' panel to query witnesses was authored by Sens. B. B. Rayburn of Bogalusa, James Adcock of Monroe, Edgar Mouton and Rep. Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette.

It provides that "the advisory committee created for the purpose of advising and offering consultative services to the joint legislative committee to invnestigate organized crime . . . shall have the right and autbority to freely and orallp propound questions to all witnesses. . ."

Adcock and Rayburn said the investigation would be a campaign issue in the next campaign, and they did not want any political opponent to charge they created a committee that "had to sit there with their mouths shut."